

Against Duelling.

A

S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
Q U E E N
In the
R O Y A L C H A P E L
A T
Windfor-Castle,
O N
November the 23d, 1712.

By *Edmund Chishull, B. D. Chaplain in
Ordinary to Her Majesty.*

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L O N D O N:

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3. Tea Tree Oil 4. Peppermint Oil

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19. Geranium Oil 20. Clary Sage Oil

21. Chamomile Oil 22. Peppermint Oil

ROM. xii. 19.

----*Avenge not your selves*----

THE Precept of this Text, tho' in company of many other, which tend to the highest Perfection of Piety and Charity, of Duty to God, and Good Will towards Men, is yet distinguish'd from the rest by a remarkable tender compellation with which it is introduc'd, together with a very solemn charge by which it is concluded. *Dearly Beloved*, says St. Paul, *Avenge not your selves ; but rather give place unto Wrath : For it is written, Vengeance is Mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.* As if he had said, " You Christians of Rome, the " place of the best Sense, as well as best Manners in the World ; I conjure you by that " Love which I bear towards you, and con- " sequently by that Love which you should " All bear towards one another ; Be not your " own Judges, much less your own Execu- " tioners, in a case of Quarrel : Should such " unfortunately happen, give place immedi- " ately to your own ; and 'till Redress can " regularly be had, to your Brother's Wrath.

“ For remember that 'tis no bare plausible
“ Opinion, no verbal Report, nor current
“ Tradition of Religion, that *Vengeance is*
“ *God's Prerogative*. No : 'tis plainly writ-
“ ten, and daily may be read in Holy Scrip-
“ ture, that This Eternally belongs to Him.
“ If any manner of Retaliation be ever ne-
“ cessary, He assumes that solely to Himself.
“ Accordingly he has committed an Autho-
“ rity to his Vice-gerents upon Earth, im-
“ powering them to bear the Sword, to bear
“ it not in vain, but to execute Wrath in
“ His Name, and by regular course of Just-
“ ice, upon every one that doeth, upon
“ every one that speaketh Evil. This is a
just Paraphrase of our *Apostle's* Precept : by
Him undoubtedly directed against all Cases of
Quarrel ; and thereupon absolutely enjoyn-
ing, that, for the greatest Injury receiv'd, no
private Person should presume to return the
least. With how much more Reason then,
may this Injunction now be urg'd, against
those who exact the greatest Penalty for the
least Offence ? Those, who by their own
unauthoriz'd Sentence, for every petty Diffe-
rence in Word or Deed, immediately con-
demn their Adversary to capital Punishment :
Nor this only, but they are so savage as to
execute it with their own Hand. This is
that pernicious practice, which, by perverting
an Institution once intended for a Justifiable
and

and Noble End, is now falsely known by the Name of *Duel*. This is that wild decision of the private Sword : That effort of mistaken and unmanly Courage ; exerted always against *true Honour*, which it boasts so much, as well as against *true Religion*, which it little minds.

Could the truth of these Reflexions have been engraven deeply, as it ought, in the Mind of every well-bred Person ; or, in default of this, could it be bound upon all Mens Memory, by some wholesome Law ; so Great a Man had not now fall'n in *Israel* ; So Unseasonable, as well as Black, a Tragedy, had not now wounded the Ears, both of Prince and People : The Hand which to Foreign Courts was commission'd with the *Olive Branch* had not now fill'd them, so untimely, with a contrary Surprize : The *Blood of War* had not been now *shed in Peace* ; nor *Abner* died as a Fool dieth.

It may not be amiss therefore to take some seasonable advantage of these sad Impressions. While every Generous Breast is now preaching to it self, and deploring, in many lively Thoughts, the Mischiefs of ungovern'd Rage ; I humbly propose the collecting of all these under one distinct View : and that by the advantage of our *Apostle's Rule* ; *Avenge not*
your

your selves. To this end I shall confine my self to the Two Heads I have already hinted, and shall endeavour in the following Discourse to shew,

I. That the Avenging not our selves is really consistent with true Honour : And,

II. That the contrary cannot possibly be consistent with true Religion.

I. Therefore I am to shew, *That the Avenging not our selves is a Thing really consistent with true Honour.* In order to this, it will here be proper to observe, that true Honour is either *Natural* or *Civil* ; or that which, being founded in one or both of these, may be term'd *Personal* Honour. *Natural Honour* is that which belongs to every Man, as he is a Rational Creature ; as he is the High Offspring, Image, and Similitude of God his Maker ; and consequently as he is invested with a certain State and Dignity of Nature, resulting from so great an Excellence. *Civil Honour* is that which belongs to Men, as they are Members of a Community, and as, by the Constitution of any Regular Government, they are united under one *Sovereign* Head. For on *Sovereign* Heads God, who is the Author of all Order, has from Himself deriv'd, together with their Authority, a plenitude of *Worldly*

Worldly Honour. And from hence, as from its first Fountain in this World, Honour is again deriv'd, according to the Favour and Wisdom of the Prince, by different channels, to all Ranks of Men : In large and noble Streams to those who are next the Throne, but in proportions still less and less to those who are farthest from it. *Personal Honour* is that Mark of Value and Esteem which, in the Eye of the World, every Person is entitled to, who adorns any State of Life to which he is call'd ; or answers any Obligation which is expected from him. It is the same thing with *Honesty*, as it proceeds from our own inward Sense of Duty ; but as it arises from the Sense of Mankind, observing how we acquit this, it is the same with *Reputation*.

Of these three sorts of Honour we may observe, That the *two former* are clear and certain, while the latter only is the quarrel-som and disputed Right. *Natural Honour* is plainly seen in the right Reason, the fair Discourse, and open Countenance of a Man. *Civil Honour* eminently is distinguish'd by the Titles and Privileges which it claims. But *Personal Honour*, having no true open Test, or Mark of its Reality, is therefore always measur'd by two very fallacious Rules, our own, and other Men's Opinion.

Again ;

Again ; The Honour of the two former more establish'd sorts has fall'n under the Apostle's Care : *Natural Honour*, in that Precept which commands us to *Honour all Men* ; and *Civil Honour*, in that known Passage which reminds us of paying *Honour to whom Honour is due*. But as for *Personal Honour*, 'tis that for which St. Paul was not at all Sollicitous. He enjoins us indeed to Merit it, by *providing things Honest in the sight of all Men* : But the Payment of it is what He advises us to overlook ; *esteeming each other better than ourselves* ; and *in Honour preferring one another*.

This being the case, it cannot be enough deplo'red, that against the Reason of the Thing, and the Advice of so good a Judge, the *Certain* should be so often Sacrific'd to the *Uncertain Honour* : That the high undoubted Honour of *Human Nature*, together with the *Honours of the Civil State*, should be defac'd in the Quarrels of that *Personal Honour*, which is so liable to Question and Dispute. Very liable indeed it is to innumerable Questions and Disputes ; and these very often drawn into unhappy Consequence. The Reason is, because some Men call their own Pride and their own Revenge by the Name of Honour ; and so require more Degrees, and more Instances of Honour than to their Person

Person and Character belong. And many again on the other side, through Malice and Ill Manners, are apt to with-hold that Honour which is another's due. But whenever good Men understand themselves and their own Rank aright, they know too that they are, on all sides, carefully secur'd from every Degree of Injury, or Affront. For nothing affecting their good Name, and, by means of their Name, their Interest, can ever be basely thrown upon them ; but the Law, in such cases, has provided a proper Remedy. Here only lies the unhappy Difficulty ; that Men of Birth affect a Military Character : And with those of Military Character its irksome to wait the Verdict of the Law. Courage is one great Ingredient of good Souldiery : And it might seem to Impeach their Courage should they attempt their Vindication by those formal Steps. With them therefore it is too frequent to become their own Avengers ; and to Summon, at all Adventures, the Guilty, and Not Guilty Party, to the Tryal of the Sword. Which resolute and enormous Pafs when any one has once rashly made ; he has, in that very Fact, renounc'd his *Remedy* in the Law ; and with that too his *Honour* which the Law insures him. It concerns therefore his yet faultless Adversary not to be so Prodigal of *his* ; but to endeavour, according to St. Paul's very

zealous Admonition, if it be possible, and as much as in him lieth, to keep the Peace. For let no Man imagine that his Courage only is concern'd to Guard him against these Attacks. Conduct as well as Courage is the Soldier's Character; and his Conduct may be really shewn in extricating himself dextrously from a Personal Rencounter, as well as from Superior Numbers, or an Ambush in the Field. To this purpose He may employ a Witty, a Discreet, or (if that is not all Mens Talent) a Soft well-manner'd Answer: Solomon's approv'd Remedy for turning away the fiercest Wrath. Besides this, some remarkable disparity of the Stakes may not unoften, and not improperly, be observ'd. A Man may fairly plead the greater importance of his Life, and the Superior value of his Person, as to Fortune, or Education, or the Service of his Prince. And so his Civil Honour, instead of falling with his Personal, shall come in very seasonably to its Succour and Relief. But after all, if unavoidable hazard of Life, and extreme Violence shall ensue; this at last is an Attack upon the Natural Honour of a Man; and will presently excuse Him who has wav'd it with his utmost Care. With Him the case then alters from *Duel* to *Self-Defence*. He is then under the most unfortunate Necessity of Killing or being Kill'd: And which, in the fore-stated

stated Circumstances, is the least of the two Evils, not Conscience, but Nature is the Judge.

Thus much in deference to the Sword, and to those who wear it, as they ought, in Defence of their Prince, their Country, and Themselves. But it must here be carefully remember'd that Religion permits no farther. If stern Military Honour is not satisfy'd with this ; if it still resolutely insists, that One must as rashly Accept, as Another has rashly Challeng'd ; if both must necessarily meet with equal Impatience, and with mutual thirst of Blood, we cannot then consent to change Right into Wrong, nor Subscribe to an Honour of this imaginary Sort. On the contrary we desire them to observe that this is certainly *an Honour which never proceeded from God ; but which cometh of Men only* : And this, not of all Men neither ; not of the Good, the Wise, the truly Great ; but only of some few among that valiant Rank, establishing strange Maxims to themselves. To them therefore it may be reply'd in the Language of the Gospel, *Ye Honour yourselves ; your Honour is nothing.* But let them go again to St. John Baptist, as we read their Predecessors did ; and by him they will be told their Duty in three very proper Instances : *Do Violence to no Man : neither accuse any falsely :*

falsly : and be content with your Wages. Let those old Instructions be still carefully observ'd : Let us all learn from the Souldier's Charge, to know our selves, to remember our Condition, and, under that Guard, to be inoffensive both in Word and Deed ; and then we shall have no unhappy occasion for insisting on their new Principles of Honour. Other Principles of Honour will then take Place : Principles which will be allow'd as soon as heard ; and which need neither the Wisdom of *Solomon*, nor the Authority of Holy Scripture for stamping them with the Mark of Truth. Such is that of the Proverbs (16. 32.) *He that is slow to Anger is better than the Mighty : And he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.* And again (19. 11.) *The discretion of a Man deferreth his Anger : And it is his Glory to pass over a Transgression.* Thus much therefore for the first Part of the Discourse, in which the *Avenging not ourselves* was to be represented as really consistent with true Honour. But,

II. We are now farther to observe, *That the contrary is indeed absolutely inconsistent with true Religion.* And here a new Process must begin. We pass now from the Dishonour, to the Irreligion of a *Duel.* A Black and heavy Charge is now necessary to be drawn

drawn up: Yet this, as a determent only from what may hereafter happen: Not as an Arraignment of any one past Offender, from the beginning of the World. To the Dead, to those who are irrecoverably fall'n by this, or any other Sin, we have no Commission. They are in the Hands of an All-merciful and All-just God: They are receiv'd into a State that will never change: They are as much beyond our Censure, as they are incapable of our Relief. But the Living, the Living, they perhaps may hear, and be preserv'd from the horrible Guilt we are now impleading. For if Men can possibly be adjur'd by all the Good of this, or of the other World; by their Relation to their Family, their Country, or their Prince; by their Interest in God, and the Value of their Immortal Soul; These, all these, are the Considerations that should restrain them, when under a Temptation to this Crime. A Crime indeed we call it, though 'tis a Complication of Crimes, many more than One: No less than Murder, and Self-Murder, and the Aggravations of them Both. 'Tis true, the effect of *Duelling* is not always quite so Tragical; because there is a good Providence which Governs the World, and which restrains the Sons of Violence from the evil they are ready to commit. But while each aims with Fury at the Life of each, they Both have Reason to expect what

what Both intend. Though therefore the Event be sometimes less, yet the Guilt of the whole ought always to be fully charg'd: And this, as it may be drawn up in the two following Particulars: *First*, That, by attempting to commit a Murder, the *Duellist* usurps God's vindictive Justice in this World. And *Secondly*, that by risquing a Self-murder He defies the same Justice on himself in the World to come.

First, By attempting to commit a Murder, the *Duellist* usurps God's Vindictive Justice in this World. Vengeance, or Vindictive Justice, is the infliction of due Punishment upon all Offences, more especially such, as are intolerable to the Order, and Society of the World. But now God being, in Truth, the Proprietor of the World, and the Author of that Order in which 'tis settled, He therefore, as such, lays claim to Vengeance, as to his own singular Prerogative. This *St. Paul* observes in the Verse of the Text, from an Assertion of that kind in *Deuteronomy*: And from the same it is, that the like Observation is made by the *Holy Psalmist*, who once Prays to God in virtue of this Attribute; redoubling the Expression; and thereby declaring the peculiar Right which God has to Vengeance. *O God, says he, to whom Vengeance belongeth: Thou God to whom Vengeance belongeth,*

longeth, shew thy self. Now when Vengeance is to be executed upon any one whole Nation, God usually exerts this, either by the Arms of some Neighbouring People, or by withholding the Fruits of the Earth, or by infecting the Air with Sickness : Whence we have those three Instances of God's Vengeance so often mentioned in Holy Scripture, the Sword, the Famine, or the Pestilence. But when the same Divine Vengeance is due not to Nations, but to Persons ; then God has committed Vengeance, in especial Trust, to those who, in any Nation, are the Vicegerents of his Power. These therefore are described by St. Paul as *the Ministers of God, bearing the Sword not in vain* : but as *Revengers to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil*. Upon this Account it is that God's Justice and Honour are both Safe when his Prerogative is thus confin'd to Hands of his own appointment. The *Judgment* they shall give is for that Reason acknowledg'd in Holy Scripture to be, *not theirs, but God's*. And this not improperly, because they, like *Moses* the first Sovereign of the Jewish People, are in the stead of God. Nor this only, but in a Phrase of the Old Testament, observ'd by our Blessed Saviour, they are call'd expressly *Gods*. *Gods* ; that is *Godlike Powers*, distributing the severest Justice in the calmest manner, without Pride, or passionate Revenge. But now how enormous

enormous must the thing appear, for any private, but revengeful Person, to call himself God, to put himself in the *stead of God*, and to execute *the Judgment which is God's*, in Derogation to all regular Authority for so doing? How flagitious is the Crime, of venturing on this High Treason against the Majesty of Heaven, and defacing God's Image, not only not with, but against his express Command? For certainly as much Difference as there is betwixt Right and Wrong, True and False, Good and Evil, so much there likewise is betwixt Blood regularly and irregularly Spilt. When Blood is spilt regularly, whether it be the *Blood of War*, as the Scripture terms it, or whether it be the Blood of Civil Justice; the quantity of this, though never so great, though never so shocking to the Eye of Pity, yet is not, for all that, offensive to right Reason: It makes no Cry, no Clamour, no Appeal in its own Defence. But on the contrary, when the Blood but of one single Life is spilt upon the Ground irregularly, it never ceases crying from thence to Heaven, and calling for Vengeance upon the shedder of it. Thus it was in the Case of the first Murder, that of *Abel*: And thus was occasion given to that strict notorious Law, not declar'd by God, like others of the Old Testament, to one Nation only, but by Him promulg'd universally to all the Sons of

Noah:

Noah: Who so sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed. By Man shall his Blood be shed. The Expression is very remarkable ; and implies, that this Original Law is no bare Declaration of God's Pleasure. It is not one of those matters which is ordinarily reserv'd for the Inquiry of the Great Day, and the Judgment of the World to come. No : It is a Law which the Sovereign Creator will have executed in this present Life. In pursuance of this therefore Man is fully Commission'd to *inquire* for the Blood of Man. And whenever there is any failure in the issue of this Inquisition ; either because the Fact did not appear, or, the Fact appearing, because Justice was perverted ; there, we see, God often steps in Himself ; and stirs up the Hand of some private Person, to execute that Wrath which the Publick has not duly done : And thus, by the secret Methods of his Justice, He punishes perhaps two Persons who have escap'd the Laws of Men ; the *Murderer*, and the *Murdered*, for their proper Sins. No thoughtful Person can have liv'd long in this World, but He must have made frequent Observations of this Nature to himself. And for the same Reason He must have call'd to mind likewise another remarkable Expression of Holy Scripture, *viz.* That the *Blood-thirsty Man shall not live out half his Days.* Some indeed there are, who,

like the *First Murderer*, are Exceptions to the Fact of this. But then, like Him too, they are sad Monuments of its Truth in another Sense. For they carry within their Breast a never ceasing Punishment ; and suffer, even by their own Sentence, Ten Thousand Deaths. They lead an uneasy Life, to which they acknowledge they have no Right : And because they are slain by no Man, they think *every Man shall slay them*. Strange ! that so many sad Examples should not Pall this inhuman Appetite ; and cure every Passionate Avenger of his Thirst for Blood !

But since this will not do ; Let such an One but step to any Court of Justice ; those more especially which are held so laudably in this Land. There let him observe with what form the Magistrate proceeds against the Life of the most notorious Criminal. Let him there take notice with what Patience, and what Tenderness, every step is made. Let him consider how the Country attends, the Jury inquires, the Judge often Reprieves, and the Sovereign sometimes remits the Sentence : And all this, for no other Reason, but because They are so much afraid of doing Justice unjustly ; and because They heartily Subscribe to that good old Heathen Admonition : *Concerning the Life and Death of Man, no tarrying can possibly be too long.* Let now the

the most implacable *Man of Honour* but duly weigh all this, in his calm and better Thoughts ; And then let him say, with what Honour He can rashly spill one Drop of human Blood, which God's Minister always spills with so much fear and caution. With what Honour we demand, as well as with what Conscience, can He do this ? For we may now close this Point with a Reflexion which recalls that Notion ; and which joins Dishonour to Irreligion in the case of Blood. The Reflexion I mean is that of *Jacob*, as now lying on his Death-Bed, and the Twelve famous Patriarchs standing round about him. The good old Man was then taking his last Leave, and distributing his respective Blessings to all his Sons. But two of these having been sometime guilty of a cruel slaughter, the very sound of their Names, and the remembrance of so Black a Guilt, disorder'd the Patriarch in his last Minutes. It occasion'd therefore his intermixing even a Curse among those famous Blessings ; and his dying with a memorable Protestation, not only against the Wickedness, but the Dishonour of the Fact. *Simeon and Levi*, said He, are Brethren : Instruments of Cruelty are in their Habitations. *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret : unto their Assembly mine Honour be not thou united : For in their Anger they slew a Man — Cursed be their Anger for it was fierce : and their*

Wrath for it was cruel, Gen. 49. 5, 6, 7. This was that *First Degree of Guilt* which is to be charg'd upon every *Duellist* when he engages in that rash Attempt : *viz.* That by attempting to commit a Murder, he usurps God's Vindictive Justice in this World.

The *Second*, which in the same Circumstances is to be charg'd upon him, is of another Nature : *viz.* That by risquing a Self-Murder, He defies the same Justice on Himself in the World to come. For though sudden Death be not always the Effect, yet 'tis always the Chance of *Duel* : And therefore whoever causelessly runs the risque of this, is, by Interpretation, a Self-Murderer, guilty of deserting the Post of Life in unrepented Sin. Life is no Man's Property : It is given us with several Conditions and Relations, which we can never absolutely Discharge ; and for that Reason it is not strictly to be esteemed our own. Strictly it is not our own, but *Family's* : Whose Support and Education is entail'd upon us, and which can never be abandon'd but by a Crime *worse than Infidelity*. Again ; Strictly it is not our own, but *Sovereign's* : under whose Shadow we are Protected, and to whom we are Reciprocally indebted the Duty and Service of Good Subjects. Above all, it is not strictly our own, but *God's*. God ; who has committed Life to

to All, as a State of Stewardship ; and as a State of Tryal. A State of Stewardship, which we must not quit without accounting : And a State of Tryal, which our Great Judge only knows when it may be safely clos'd. For these Reasons it is, that every causeless Desertion of our Station, and Post in Life, must appear a very heinous Crime : How much more so, when Rebellion is added to Desertion, and to the quitting of the good Things of this World, a defiance of all the Evil of the next. Yet such is the Case of Him, who runs upon one Sword, while He draws another ; and in his own, as well as Brother's Person, breaks that Command of God ; "*Thou shalt not Kill.*" He who breaks this by *Murder*, stands in need undoubtedly of a very severe Repentance : But He who breaks it by *Self-Murder* too, excludes the still greater Repentance which he needs. For Repentance being a thorough change of Mind, a Man, in that last revengeful Minute, has neither an Opportunity, nor a Disposition for such a Change. Far from either of these, the *Sun is like to go down* for Ever upon his *Wrath* : He ventures to leave the World *Unforgiving*, and *Unforgiven* ; involv'd in three horrible Things which we pray against ; *Battel, and Murder, and Sudden Death.*

But

But these are melancholy Reflexions, fitter for Meditation than Discourse. What hinders then, but that we recur, for a comfortable Conclusion, to that most Excellent, always seasonable Instruction of *our Lord's Prayer*? There we may freely ask the *forgiveness of our greatest Faults*; if we never disqualify ourselves, by refusing to *forgive our Neighbour*. There we may humbly pray, that God would never *lead us into this great Temptation*: Or, if for our Sins He should suffer this, that He would *deliver us from the Evil* which attends it. For *His, and not ours, is the Kingdom*. He is the Sovereign Judge of all the World: the Proprietor of ours, and our Brother's Life. *His, and not ours, is the Power*. On Him alone we must depend for Justice, Able, as He is ready, to revenge our Quarrel. *His, and not ours, is the Glory*. Glory, as well as Vengeance, Eternally is his Prerogative: And there is no *True Honour* but that which proceeds from Him.

F I N I S.

By the same Author.

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